

Message Text

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63 L

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 L-03 OMB-01 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 INRE-00

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O R 121932Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3755

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4599

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PFOR, PINT,PO

SUBJ: SUPPORT FOR ANTUNES GROUP

REFS: LISBON 4558

SUMMARY: COMMANDO REGIMENT VOTES FOR ANTUNES DOCUMENT AND
CO EXPECTS SHOWDOWN IN FEW DAYS. ANTUNES ASSOCIATE, CDR. CRESPO,
CONFIRMED ACCURACY OF MODERATES GAME PLAN AND MILITARY SUPPORT
DESCRIBED IN REFTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMANDOS SUPPORT ANTUNES GROUP: RELIABLE EMBASSY SOURCE, WHO
SPOKE WITH COMMANDO C.O. COL. JAIME NEVES TODAY, HAS INFORMED
US OF FOLLOWING. THE AMADORA COMMANDO REGIMENT (TOUGHEST AND
BEST DISCIPLINED MILITARY UNIT IN LISBON AREA) VOTED ON AUGUST
11 TO SUPPORT THE ANTUNES GROUP. 468 TROOPS SHOWED UP FOR THE
VOTE. SECRET BALLOT WAS TAKEN: 310 VOTED YEST (66 PCT); 36 VOTED
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NO (7PECT); AND THE REMAINDER HAD NO OPINION. NEVES TELEPHONED

PART OF HIS UNITS IN LUANDA (176 MEN) AND THEY VOTED UNANIMOUSLY IN FAVOR OF MANIFESTO.

2. NEVES SAID RESULTS ARE NOW IN FROM NORTH AND CENTRAL MILITARY REGIONS, INCLUDING LISBON, AND THAT 90 PCT OF THOSE VOTING FAVORED THE MANIFESTO. HE KNOWS OF ONLY THREE UNITS IN THE LISBON AREA WHERE COMMANDERS ORDERED THE MANIFESTO NOT TO BE READ. NEVES EXPECTS A SHOWDOWN WITHIN NEXT FEWS DAYS. IN NEVES'S OPINION, IF GOP DOES NOT MAKE BASIC CHANGES WITHIN A WEEK HE BELIEVES THERE WILL BE SOME FIGHTING.

3. CRESPO'S VIEWS. ALONG WITH OTHERS, UK CHARGE URE LUNCHEON AUGUST 12 AT IBERLANT HEADQUARTERS WITH COMMANDER VITOR CRESPO, MODERATE MEMBER OF RC AND SIGNER OF MANIFESTO. CRESPO SAID THAT ANTUNES GROUP HAD SUPPORT OF 80 PERCENT OF THE MILITARY. ALTHOUGH SOME HAD QUESTIONED WHETHER THE ENLISTED MEN WOULD SUPPORT A MOVE BY THE ANTUNES GROUPS, CRESPO POINTED OUT THAT DESPITE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE ENLISTED RANKS THE MEN WOULD OBEY THEIR OFFICERS. CRESPO SAID THAT THE ANTUNES GROUP WOULD CONFRONT PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES WITH THE GROUP'S OVERWHELMING SUPPORT IN THE MILITARY. THEY EXPECT TO DO THIS WITHIN A FEW DAYS. IF COSTA GOMES DOES NOT RESPOND THEN "JUST WAIT A WEEK." CRESPO WANTS TO AVOID VIOLENCE JUST AS ORIGINAL GROUP OF COUP PLOTTERS DID ON APRIL 25, 1974. ALTHOUGH VIOLENCE COULD MAKE THE JOB EASIER AND FASTER THEY WERE AS DETERMINED TO AVOID IT AS THEY HAD BEEN IN THE ORIGINAL COUP. CRESPO STRESSED THIS POINT REPEATEDLY.

4. RE OTELO'S POSITION, CRESPO SAID THAT OTELO WAS DEFINITELY WITH ANTUNES GROUP. BUT, HE SAID, OTELO IS OTELO-- A LOUD-MOUTH WHO SIMPLY DOES NOT REALIZE THE IMPORT OF HIS PUBLIC UTTERANCES. FOR EXAMPLE, CRESPO SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD OTELO BEFORE LATTER'S CUBAN TRIP NOT TO COME BACK AND SAY ANYTHING STUPID. BUT, AS EXPECTED, OTELO DID SO. AFTER HEARING OTELO'S FAVORABLE REMARKS ABOUT CASTRO'S CUBA, CRESPO SAID THAT HE WENT DIRECTLY TO OTELO AND TAXED HIM FOR SAYING THAT CUBA OFFERED A VIABLE MODEL FOR PORTUGAL. ACCORDING TO CRESPO, OTELO READILY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT CUBA DID NOT OFFER SUCH A MODEL. CRESPO'S CONCLUSION RE OTELO IS THAT HE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY AN UNGUIDED MISSILE, BUT BASICALLY A SINCERE

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PORTUGUESE PATRIOT--ALBIET A "REVOLUTIONARY" IN CRESPO'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM (SEE BELOW).

5. NATO: CRESPO SAID HIS PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR PORTUGAL TO REMAIN AN ACTIVE MILITARY PARTNER OF THE ALLIANCE. POLITICALLY PORTUGAL WAS PAYING TOO HIGH A PRICE FOR ITS NATO MEMBERSHIP. WHEN OTHER LUNCHEON GUESTS PRESSED CRESPO ON THIS POINT, HE SAID THAT PORTUGAL ABOVE

ALL WANTED TO SERVE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA. HE THOUGHT THAT BEING PART OF NATO'S MILITARY ORGANIZATION HINDERED THIS. THE OTHER LUNCHEON GUESTS POINTED OUT FORCEFULLY TO CRESPO THAT PORTUGAL GAINED, RATHER THAN LOST, BY BEING IN THE ALLIANCE BOTH IN FINANCIAL AND MILITARY TERMS. CRESPO ACKNOWLEDGED THIS BUT IMPLIED RATHER VIGOROUSLY THAT WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WAS A POLITICAL GAIN THAT WOULD ACCRUE TO PORTUGAL IF IT WERE NOT COMPLETELY A MEMBER OF A MILITARY ALLIANCE. PRESSED FURTHER ON THIS POINT BY THE BRITISH CHARGE, CRESPO REPLIED THAT HIS VIEWS ON PORTUGAL'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO DID NOT APPLY TO BILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH INDIVIDUAL NATO MEMBERS. THESE, HE THOUGHT, WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO PORTUGAL IN THE FUTURE-- INCLUDING THE PORTUGAL-U.S. BILATERAL ON LAJES.

6. ECONOMIC: CRESPO SAID HE RESENTED BEING CALLED A "MODERATE." HE WAS A "REVOLUTIONARY." HE POINTED OUT THAT HE PERSONALLY FELT THAT MOST ENTERPRISES SHOULD BE OWNED BY THE GOVERNMENT. THERE WERE SOME EXCEPTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, SUPER MARKETS, BUT IN GENERAL HE WOULD GO BEYOND WHAT THE BRITISH HAVE ALREADY DONE.

7. FOLLOWING THE LUNCHEON CRESPO ASKED TO STAY AT NATO HEADQUARTERS TO TALK WITH THE PORTUGUESE NAVAL OFFICERS ASSIGNED TO IBERLANT RE ANTUNES MODERATES.

8. BRITISH CHARGE DESCRIBED CRESPO AS A HONEST, FORTHRIGHT, LEVEL-HEADED AND SOBER MAN.
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